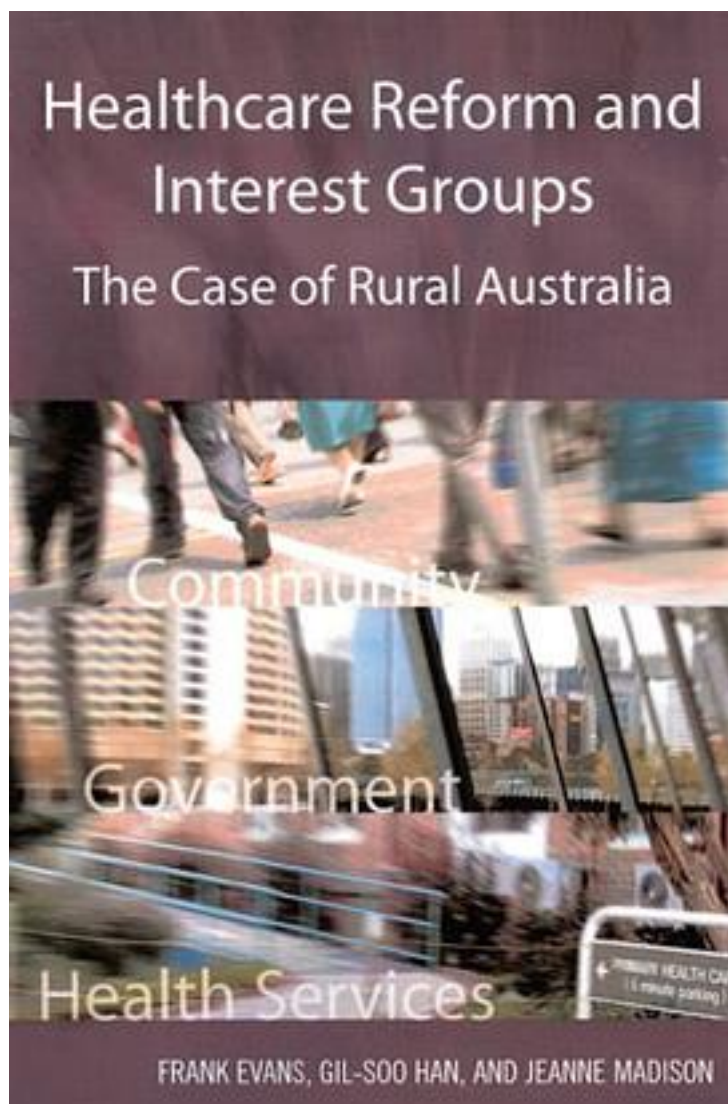


Healthcare Reform and Interest Groups



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著者:Evans, Frank

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Rural Australia has faced many economic and demographic disadvantages. Advances in medical technology and economic reforms have led to the closure or near closure of many rural hospitals. Since the late 1980s, the Australian government has increased their focus on the quality and functionality of rural health. Most notable was the development of a rural health strategy and the introduction of flexibly funded, integrated health services, otherwise known as Multipurpose Services (MPS). Healthcare Reform and Interests Groups explores the resistance that the MPSs encountered from rural health professionals and rural communities in Australia. The MPS program in Victoria provided an opportunity to review the response of structural interest groups when the status quo is challenged. Healthcare Reform and Interest Groups analyzes the development of the MPS program in Victoria, in particular the processes and outcomes associated with the development of an MPS in Corryong, a small town in Victoria. The study led to the testing of findings in other Victorian communities. The goal of the study was to understand why the Victorian MPS program, developed to help improve the distribution of rural health services, was met with such resistance. With interesting analysis of the power and conflict issues between rural general practitioners, the government, and health bureaucrats, Healthcare Reform and Interest Groups examines the critical role of the community in Australia's healthcare reform.

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